inputting, at the second data terminal, a second graphical representation of the subject;

downloading, from the centralized computer, information representative of the previously stored first graphical representation of the subject;

comparing, at the location of the ~~first~~ second data terminal, the first and second graphical representations of the subject; and

authenticating the user if the first and second graphical representations of the subject are substantially the same.

7. The method of ~~claim~~ 6, where the first and second data terminals ~~are~~ the same.

8. The method of claim 6, further including the step of data compressing the first graphical representation of the subject prior to the step of storing information representative of the subject in the relational database disposed at the location of the centralized computer.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein the graphical representation of the subject is the facial likeness of an individual.

10. The method of claim 6, wherein the graphical representation of the subject is a fingerprint.

11. The method of ~~claim 6, wherein the subject~~ is inanimate.

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12. The method of claim 6, further including the step of storing, at the first data terminal, a database of subject graphical representations for the purpose of making localized comparisons.

13. The method of claim 6, further including the step of storing local databases of subject graphical representations at each of a plurality of remote data terminals, each database being encrypted so that a particular data terminal cannot interpret the database of another.--

Remarks

By this amendment, new method claims 6-13 have been added, leaving claims 1-13 now pending in this application, and all are presented for reconsideration in light of the following remarks.

By way of a short review, the present invention overcomes limitations of prior-art systems by providing an independent, centralized database to store data-compressed images of subject individuals or items. These data-compressed images may then be downloaded, on demand, to a local data terminal at the time of a transaction as part of an authentication process. As the image information is not stored within an identification card by itself, the information is not subject to alteration or replication by an unauthorized user. Moreover, in a preferred embodiment, the use of encryption techniques makes the image information useless if the data signals are somehow intercepted. New method claims 6-13 recite steps associated with this process.

Claims 1-5, which have not been amended as part of this response, currently stand rejected under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over Piosenka et al, U.S. Patent No. 4,993,068 in view

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